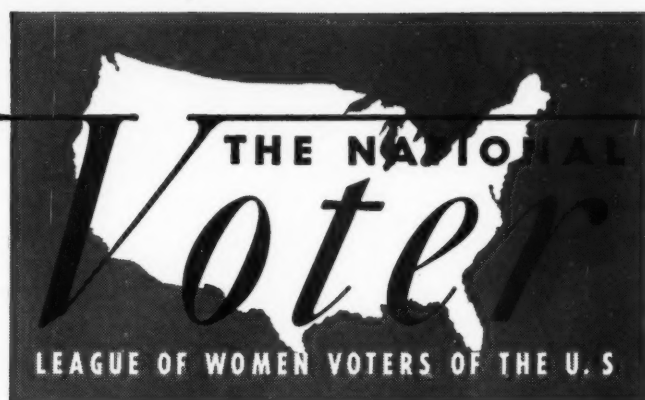


DECEMBER 15, 1954



1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

All in a Day at the United Nations

By MRS. OSCAR M. RUEBHAUSEN, Accredited Observer at the United Nations for the League of Women Voters

"EXACTLY what do you do at the United Nations?" is the inevitable question that confronts an observer. To understand the answer one must go back to the San Francisco Conference of 1945 when the Charter of the United Nations was being drafted. At that time our Department of State was besieged with requests from groups and individuals saying, "I want to go to San Francisco too."

With a good deal of trepidation the State Department permitted a representative from each of 46 national organizations to attend the conference, and the League of Women Voters was among those invited. Our government was naturally apprehensive that those representing special interest groups might spend their time buttonholing delegates to push for the inclusion of pet ideas in the Charter. Or they worried that some of the observers might turn their talents to autograph and souvenir hunting among the delegates.

The truth of the matter is that, instead of being a nuisance, most of the observers developed into a constructive force in support of the United Nations. They returned home convinced that an agency for world cooperation was imperative. The resulting mobilization of national organizations behind the U.N. was one important factor in the overwhelming Senate endorsement of the U.N. by 89 votes to two.

Cross Section of the United States

Recognizing the value of liaison with the public, the State Department expanded the consultative arrangement so that it now includes approximately 150 nongovernmental organizations. To qualify, a group must be a national organization interested in foreign policy. The observers represent a great cross section of American life, including members from labor, business, farm, civic, veterans', women's, fraternal and leading religious groups. The experiment is unique because, for the first time, organizations have been given a semi-official role in advising their government on United Nations policy. To a lesser degree the same liaison exists in other countries. It is stimulating to think that throughout the world the voices of people are heard via their representatives at the U.N.

To accomplish our goal we United States observers have frequent meetings with our delegation to the United Nations. The exchange of ideas and information is a two-way street.

At many meetings, members of the U. S. delegation give details on particular issues before the U.N. and explain the position the U. S. will take. We observers share such information with our organizations.

But the observers do more than receive information at these meetings. Often the U. S. delegation is anxious to get the reaction of the organizations to an important issue that will be coming up for a vote in the U.N. Those observers who represent organizations with a position on the issue in question then have an opportunity to present their points of view.

On some occasions when an observer presses for a particular point of view, a member of the U. S. delegation calls attention to the fact that the delegation acts only upon authorization from the government and that the observer should communicate his or her point of view to the President, the Department of State and the Congress. The point is obvious: the delegation cannot move without instructions from the government and the government cannot move too far ahead of public opinion.

Dual Role of the Observer

Consequently, the observers have a double job. We must not only follow what goes on at the United Nations, but we must translate its purposes and acts so that the public will see its worth and demand its support.

Each of us sets about this task differently, but let me hasten to say that we are true to the American tradition of having an organization for everything. To coordinate the work of the observers, we have not one group, but two. One for representatives of women's groups is called Women United for the United Nations. Among its projects this group runs an Information Center for the United Nations and also writes a monthly radio bulletin for women broadcasters which is published by the United Nations. In this bulletin we try to write U.N. news in simple fashion to be understood by the average American.

The second group, the Conference Group of U. S. National Organizations on the U.N., is composed of both men and women observers. It holds informational meetings, publishes a bulletin to tell what organizations are doing about the U.N., and coordinates those groups which want to work together on special projects.

Special Service to the Leagues

In addition to working with each other, observers also service their own memberships, and this is quite an experience with a group as dynamic as the League of Women Voters. A few typical examples will show you what I mean.

A phone call comes from Mt. Clemens, (*Cont. on p. 2*)

The Pamphlet's the Thing

IN OUR supersonic age, we may think of our forefathers as living in a communicationless vacuum—no "See It Now" programs on television, no "American Forum" panels on radio, no documentaries or newsreels on the movie screen! How could the early colonists possibly discover what problems they had in common?

The answer, of course, was the printed word. Freedom of the press, though barely in its infancy, had already taken on real meaning. Utilizing a new-found freedom, our founding fathers shared their ideas through pamphlets.

The pamphlet is as good a medium for provoking thought and discussion today as it was 200 years ago.

- You can't tuck a challenging "Meet the Press" program under your pillow to browse through at a later moment. But you can pull out your dog-eared copy of Alfred H. Kelly's pamphlet *Where Constitutional Liberty Came From* to reflect on his statement that "our faith in constitutional government and individual liberty is not just a piece of intellectual luggage from a dead age."

- Or you can reread and ponder over T. V. Smith's statement in *The Bill of Rights and Our Individual Liberties* that "the American Constitution made so nice an adjustment of the three departments of power—legislative, executive, and judicial—that both the will to power and the temptation to complacency are kept under control."

- If you would rather start an animated discussion with your neighbor as to the relative value of freedom of speech, try quoting from Zechariah Chafee's pamphlet *Freedom of Speech and Press* such provocative statements as: "One of the most cherished desires of many a human being is to think and express his thoughts to others—to speak out the truth that is in him" and "... one of the purposes for which society exists, just as for the maintenance of order, is the discovery and spread of truth."

- Or on the question as to what extent "due process" can operate in congressional committees, i.e., which courtroom procedures apply and which do not, you can share the pamphlet *The Constitution and Congressional Investigating Committees* by Robert K. Carr.

- Or you can use Alan Westin's pamphlet on *The Constitution and Loyalty Programs*, in which he compares the problem of setting up a workable and a just loyalty-security program to the touchy job of killing poison ivy without killing the other plants in the forest.

- Or you can explore the knotty problem of drawing the line between "criticism" and "sedition" by basing your discussion on Jack Peltason's *Constitutional Liberty and Seditious Activity*.

The six pamphlets described above have been published by the Freedom Agenda Program of the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund as a stimulus for widespread community discussions. Combined, they offer in concise, readable form (the pamphlets run about 50 pages each) an over-all historical view of our great individual liberty heritage, as well as a birds-eye view of specific aspects of the subject.

Where can you get your copies? If your publications chairman does not already have these pamphlets, she can order them directly from the Freedom Agenda Program, 164 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

'Twas the day after New Year's and all League members were listening to the League's five-minute spot on "Week-end." January 2, NBC radio, immediately following the 4:00 P.M. (EST) newscast.

Polling Place, American Style

"HOW do you keep people from voting twice?" "If different factions get into a fight what do you do?"

"But which side is the police department on?"

These were typical of the questions asked by about 80 men and women from 20 countries, "poll watching" in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland, and in Arlington, Virginia, on November 2. They were from South America, the Near East, the Far East and Europe. Their questions were answered by members of the League of Women Voters in the three respective communities.

It all started when the Foreign Operations Administration asked the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund to arrange a visit to the polls for 40 foreign trainees in public administration. The Leagues responded so enthusiastically to the CCCMF's request that the group was enlarged to include 25 foreign visitors receiving orientation lectures at the International Center in Washington, D. C., and 15 foreign employees of U. S. Information Centers abroad.

In one community, visitors gathered at the home of the League president, where issues in the local election were explained. In the other two, they interviewed candidates. They watched the entire process of voting. They visited several different polling places in each of the respective communities. They pulled the lever on sample voting machines.

They found it difficult to believe that workers standing in the rain passing out literature were not paid. The whole concept of "the volunteer" made a great impact on them. They were amazed that their League of Women Voters guides were taking their own time to show foreign visitors around. They were even more astonished that, though their guides had party affiliations, they answered questions objectively and presented both sides. They were torn between admiration for this nonpartisanship and a feeling that it was related to what they called "loose party control" in the United States. They learned with horror that a voter could, and would, split his ticket.

Altogether it was a League "go see" project with an international twist, and it is difficult to know which group learned the more or ended the tour with the more enthusiasm—the visitors or the guides.

ALL IN A DAY AT THE U.N.—(Cont. from page 1)

Michigan, asking that arrangements be made for a visit of high school students to the United Nations. On their return home the group will speak to local organizations giving impressions of their visit.

Next comes a letter from Clearwater, Florida, telling me how they used quotes from Ambassador Lodge's *Collier's* article on the U.N. in a letter to the editor of their newspaper. This information is forwarded to the U. S. Mission to the U.N. to show how the article has been extended beyond the readers of *Collier's*.

The mail brings letters asking advice on speakers, on how to run essay contests in schools, the use of U.N. films, and how to invite members of the U.N. Secretariat for the week-end.

All of these activities indicate that my duties as an observer at the U.N. are similar to those of any League member working on a local project. For me, it is a great privilege to represent you, because your hard work has given the League an unsurpassed reputation in United Nations circles.

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